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brought about by Orthodox Christian missions. Unlike most other peoples of the Soviet Far East the Aleuts of the Commander Islands had been completely Christianized. In the first five years of the Soviet régime there was one church on Bering Island and another one on Medny. By 1934 the church of Bering Island was closed and that of Medny was reported as 'no longer functioning'. An increasing number of voices could be heard, said an official report, urging that the church building should be used for 'cultural needs'.[40] Such 'spontaneous popular movements' for the closing down of churches have often been reported from many parts of Soviet Russia. On the other hand, it is true that the percentage of communist party members in the Aleutian National District is higher than in any other territorial unit, not only in the Far East but in the whole of the U.S.S.R. 35 per cent of the population is organized either in the Communist Party or in the Communist Youth League, according to the latest figures available.

Before the war the local Soviet authorities of the Commander Islands were composed exclusively of natives. However, no undue significance should be attached to this fact, since the Aleuts as a people are half-Russianized, and Russian is the official language in the District. The Aleutian language, which is used by the Soviet Aleuts in their homes and for private conversation, is actually a mixture of Aleutian and Russian, in which Aleutian endings are added to Russian words.[41] Moreover, the inhabitants of the two Commander Islands speak different Aleutian dialects and can converse with each other only in Russian. Russian is also the language in which a small newspaper is printed on Bering Island for the benefit of the Aleuts and the handful of Russians who are all working on the blue fox State farm 'Komodor'. The name of the paper is *The Aleut Star*. Its sub-title shows that the Commander Islands, despite their tiny population, have a highly organized political life. It reads as follows: 'Organ of the Aleutian District Committee of the All-Union Communist Party, the All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League, the District Executive Committee and the District Trade Union Council.'[42]

In the post-war period considerable attention has been paid to the Commander Islands in connection with the 'cold war'. Their population seems to have increased. An official Soviet report of November 1949 said that the islands had several seven-year schools – only two schools had existed before the war – and that many prefabricated houses had been shipped from the continent.[43]

AINU, RUSSIANS AND JAPANESE

When occupying Southern Sakhalin in 1945, the Soviet authorities took charge not only of a large Japanese population, but also of small

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groups of aborigines. These included over 300 Tunguz, over 100 Nivkhi* and over 1,500 Ainu. Several hundred Ainu also came under Soviet rule through the annexation of the Kurile Islands. The Soviet Government has tried to strengthen its case for the undivided possession of Sakhalin by asserting that only the Russians were able to establish correct relations with the Ainu, while the Japanese oppressed them. The propagandists of the Soviet régime have even alleged that the Czarist Admiral Nevelskoy, who established Russian rule over Sakhalin, did so with the express purpose 'of defending the Ainu against the acts of violence of foreigners'. The Ainu, the propagandists affirm, gave enthusiastic support to the Russians when they landed in Sakhalin in 1853.[46]

Zadornov, a Soviet writer of historical fiction on the Far East, tries to show that the Ainu are almost fanatically pro-Russian. He asserts in his novel *Distant Country* that the Ainu of Southern Sakhalin looked forward eagerly, throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, to the arrival of the Russian liberators. 'We have been waiting for them for many years, we have been waiting for the time when it will be possible to kill the Japanese', Zadornov's Ainu said.[46]

In reality the Ainu of Southern Sakhalin did not seem to be very keen on killing the Japanese or driving them away. In 1875, when the Russian sovereignty over Southern Sakhalin became final, and when the Japanese formally renounced their rights on the island, 800 Sakhalin Ainu left for Hokkaido. They did not return until 1905, after the re-annexation of Karafuto by Japan. For a long time there was a considerable cleavage between these Ainu re-immigrants and their less advanced former fellow-tribesmen, who had never been away from their home island. This cleavage did not disappear until 1933, when all Ainu were granted Japanese citizenship. Originally the Japanese authorities on Karafuto had put five schools at the disposal of the Ainu minority, but when all members of this minority became full Japanese citizens, these schools were abolished, and the Ainu children transferred to Japanese schools.[58]

Since 1945 the Ainu have frequently been mentioned by Soviet propaganda, and their case has become typical of the hypocrisy of Soviet nationalities policy. While several hundred thousand Japanese were expelled from the new Soviet territories, the Ainu were proclaimed 'equal members of the family of Soviet peoples', and at once granted the right to participate in the elections to the Soviet Parliament.[47] Soviet scholars immediately started to study the interesting Ainu people, and the Soviet Academy of Sciences even set up a special branch in Southern

* Under Japanese rule the Tunguz and Nivkhi lived in a native reserve near the town of Shikuka (Poronaysk). Their administrative head was the Karafuto 'reindeer-king', a Yakut, who, with his family, had fled from Soviet territory.

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Sakhalin which was entrusted, among other things, with 'raising the cultural and living standard of its native population', the Ainu in particular.[48]

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Three years after the establishment of Soviet sovereignty over Karafuto Russian propaganda claimed that 'a revival of the ancient, original culture of the Ainu people' was noticeable, and that an 'Ainu national literary language' was in the process of being created.[49]

THE 'NATIONAL AREAS' OF THE EVENI AND KORYAKS

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In 1930 three 'National Areas' were founded in the Far Eastern Territory, one for the Eveni (Lamuts), one for the Koryaks, and one for the Chukchi. The last two are still in existence, but the 'National Area' of the Eveni – Okhotsko-Evensky National Area was the official name – was disbanded after four years. It is doubtful whether the Eveni National Area, which covered 400,000 square miles, ever existed except on paper. The Eveni as a nomad people were not prepared to accept the notion of a territory with stable frontiers and a permanently fixed cultural and political centre. The attempt to erect such a centre, first in Okhotsk, later in Nogayevo, failed.[50] The National Area of the Eveni was formally abolished as a result of the progress which Russian colonization by convicts had made around the Okhotsk Sea in the early 'thirties'. By 1934 the proportion of natives in the population of the National Area had dropped to 40 per cent as against 80 per cent shortly before its foundation.

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The Koryak National Area has been able to survive because the Soviet authorities have not yet succeeded in fully exploiting its riches, and have not, up to now, swamped the area with convicts and other settlers. The Koryak National Area covers the northern part of the Kamchatka peninsula, and the adjacent part of the Asiatic mainland. It is 125,000 square miles in area, and had 11,400 inhabitants in 1926. Out of this total, 61 per cent were then Koryaks, 8·9 per cent Chukchi, 7·1 per cent Kamchadals, and 5·5 per cent Eveni. The Russians accounted for 14·3 per cent.

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The leading Soviet expert on the arctic and sub-arctic regions of the Soviet Far East, M. A. Sergeev, considers that the Koryak National Area is, politically and economically, one of the most important parts of North East Asia, in view of its close proximity to Japan and the U.S.A. Sergeev, who wrote the only available monograph on the Koryak National Area, pointed out that the Area had a considerable part to play in Russian foreign trade, and that it could develop into a territory earning for the whole Soviet Union an appreciable amount of foreign currency.[51] Among the economic assets of the National Area Sergeev lists its riches in fish, reindeer and fur animals, as well as gold and oil. All these items should be used for export, whereas the chief importance